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January 30, 2012

Judith Samuel, President
Afro-American Genealogical & Historical Society of Chicago
P.O. Box 377651, Chicago, IL 60637-7651
Telephone: 773-602-2743
Email: aaghsc@yahoo.com

Re: Chairman Johnson Hearing on Social Security Death Records, February 2, 2012.

To: The House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security

U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson (R-TX), Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security will hold a hearing on the accuracy and uses of the Social Security Administration's Death Master File. I am submitting the following information to be submitted into the hearing record.

The Afro-American Genealogy & Historical Society of Chicago stands with the Records Preservation and Access Committee (RPAC), an umbrella organization representing the genealogical community, in maintaining access to the Social Security Death Index (Death Master File).

Genealogists rely on Social Security numbers to correctly identify individuals. We share Congress' concern about protecting Americans from identity theft. In that regard, RPAC notes that rarely has it been documented that an individual's identity is violated by access to the SSDI; rather, the violations occur due to computer breaches from government and private enterprises.

Please consider the legislative suggestions submitted by RPAC to address deficiencies in the current operation of the Death Master File.

We ask that you protect genealogists' access to the Death Master File which is vital to documenting our family histories.

Sincerely,

Judith Samuel, President
Afro-American Genealogical & Historical Society of Chicago

cc: Board of Directors